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EXPULSION OF CATHOLIC "IMPERIALIST ELEMENTS" FROM CHINA

Chieh-fang Jih-pao
Shanghai, 1-15 Jul 1953

[Comment: The following information was taken from Chieh-fang Jih-pao accounts, 1-15 July 1953, of a movement by the Communist regime to expel foreign Catholics from China. People's rallies accused "imperialist elements" of mistreating the poor and plotting against the regime. Moslems, Protestants, and other groups were said to have joined in demanding punishment of these elements in the name of "religious freedom."]

Shanghai Catholic Converts Support Arrest of French Imperialist Elements

According to the Shanghai Chieh-fang Jih-pao of 2 July 1953, the People's Consultative Council of Shanghai passed a resolution calling upon the broad masses to "smash imperialist elements utilizing Catholicism as a cloak to plot sabotage." A member of the council, Yang Yien-nien, who is a Catholic convert, said there must be a "clear demarcation made between Catholics and imperialist elements posing as Catholics by eliminating the latter."

The same issue reported that Tang Hsi-meng, a Catholic convert and grade school teacher, had accused "imperialist elements" of hypocrisy and fraud by citing the case of Shuang Kuo-ying, a French Catholic priest in Haichow, Kiangsu, who allegedly cooperated with warlords and the Japanese. Tang Hsi-meng also denounced Ho Ju-lu as an "imperialist element" and accused Ho of furnishing intelligence concerning the old liberated areas to American-Chiang bandits, of opposing the takeover of American supported religious organizations, and of branding those who quit the Legion of Mary as backsliders. Ho was also accused of ordering Catholics to fight land reforms, because they were "unfair," and not to support the anticorruption drives, because they were "inhuman." Moreover, Ho allegedly created propaganda about the "fearfulness of the atomic [weapons] of the American imperialists" and also attacked Sino-Soviet friendship.

The newspaper said, "With the arrest of imperialist elements in Shanghai, they have raised the cry of religious persecution. But this is not persecution, it means the end of imperialists. The government must be supported in cleaning out imperialist elements from Catholicism."

The same issue of the newspaper reported that Tsung-ming Hsien masses held a rally on 20 June and passed a resolution praising the arrest of four "imperialist elements" in Shanghai. The paper pointed out that this was evidence of their refusal to admit defeat. The resolution charged these "imperialist elements and their running dogs" with spying, spreading rumors, and creating dissension among the masses under the cloak of religion. It accused Catholic workers of planning counterrevolutionary activities with special agents of the American government and Chiang Kai-shek. It pointed out that "imperialist elements must be expelled in order to protect world peace, protect national construction, defend the people's democratic dictatorship, and purify religious organizations which would guarantee the freedom of religion."

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On 14 July, the Chieh-fang Jih-pao accused Wan Erh-tien, a French priest and head of the Tu-shan-wan Workshop, of being a gangster in France before he came to China. He was accused of forcing orphans to join the paratroop and armored corps of the Chiang bandits and of listening to US radio broadcasts for news which he allegedly passed on to his parishioners. The paper said that after the victory of the People's Liberation Army, he appointed a Chinese Catholic official to takeover the Tu-shan-wan Workshop, but he was accused of manipulating affairs from behind.

On 15 July, the same newspaper reported that 2,000 people massed at the St Mary's Orphanage to hear accusations against "imperialist elements" by workers in Catholic charitable institutions. Catholic converts Li Fu-lang, Hsia Te-ming, and Chiang Chin-ti charged that "imperialist elements" had plotted with Kuomintang bandits and threatened striking workers by calling in the French police. The French father in charge of the orphanage was accused of saying "it is hard to find a hundred dogs in Shanghai; but easy to get a hundred men" [to work]. A nurse, Chang Fu-su, accused "imperialist elements" of giving fake drugs to patients, preventing Catholics from participating in the Resist America and Aid Korea Campaign and the peace movement, and opposing such "patriotic movements" as the expulsion of Apostolic Nuncio Riberi and charges of "American germ warfare."

On 1 July, the newspaper carried the statement of Hu Chien-ming, Acting Bishop of Nanchang Diocese, which declared that the arrest of Tien Wan-lin and Lin Jen, Belgian Catholic Fathers, was a disgrace to the Catholic Church, but nevertheless the fathers did send "political, economic, and cultural intelligence in secret code to intelligence agencies abroad." He rebuked Catholics who considered themselves above politics and mundane affairs and for believing that foreign priests went to China only to propagate the faith.

Noncatholic Circles Support Attack on Imperialist Elements

On 13 July, the Chieh-fang Jih-pao carried a statement made by 19 Moslems which supported the punishment of "imperialist elements" plotting sabotage under the cloak of Catholicism. Charging that a century of imperialist aggression had brought untold misery to the Chinese masses, the statement said, "Moslems love their motherland like their own eyes and will not permit imperialist elements to sabotage their beloved country. Therefore, Moslems will support Catholics in wiping out imperialist elements in order to assure the dictatorship of the people's democracy and the freedom of religion."

On 8 July, the Chieh-fang Jih-pao reported that the 3 July meeting of the Shanghai Branch of the China Democratic National Construction Association endorsed steps to punish imperialist elements plotting sabotage activities under the cloak of Catholicism, as "very proper and in accordance with the Common Program." The association called for a determined struggle against such elements in order to guarantee the freedom of religion, suppress counterrevolutionaries, and to assure the people's democratic dictatorship.

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